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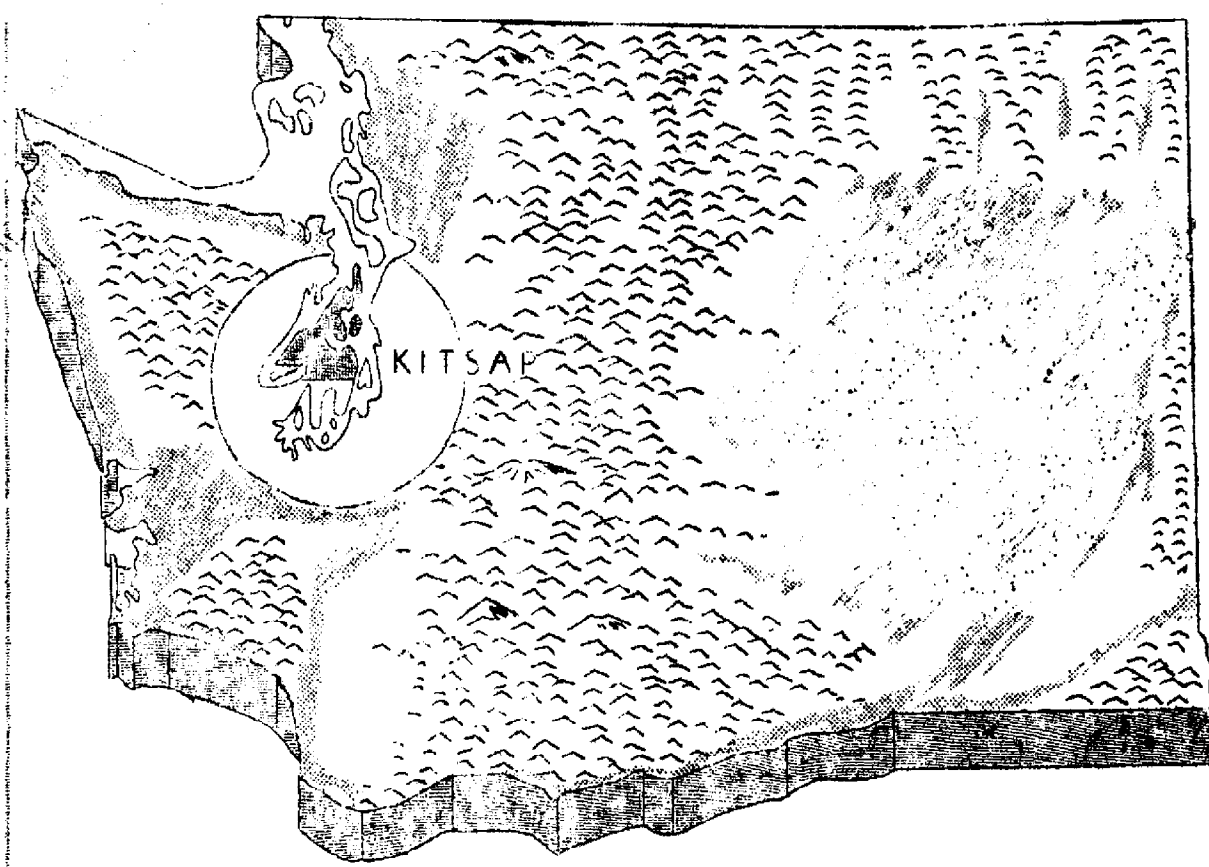
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KITSAP COUNTY

AGRICULTURE

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COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DATA SERIES
1956



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
J. D. Dwyer, Director

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
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WASHINGTON CROP AND LIVESTOCK REPORTING SERVICE
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Seattle 4, Washington

FOREWORD

This book on Kitsap County is one of an original series being devoted to the history and present nature of agriculture in each of the thirty-nine counties of the State of Washington. This project was initiated in 1956 through funds made available by Sverre N. Omdahl, Director, Washington State Department of Agriculture, 1948-56. State funds were matched by moneys from the United States Department of Agriculture under the Research and Marketing Act of 1946.

County agricultural data books are intended to serve a variety of needs. Continually changing conditions in a dynamic state such as Washington require constant planning by groups and individuals both in private enterprise and public service. Comprehensive knowledge of land resources, population and agricultural-economic trends in a local area such as Kitsap County is of great value. This book will be useful for reference in public and private instruction by vocational agriculture and social studies teachers in Kitsap County schools. It has been devised also to inform adults interested in knowing more about their immediate area, as well as persons and enterprises concerned with agricultural production and marketing or prospective settlement and investment in the county.

Carefully selected geographic facts, agricultural history, population trends and statistical data are included to give an over-all appreciation of Kitsap County. The enumerations of the United States Censuses of Population and Agriculture since 1860 and recent estimates of the Washington State Census Board are summarized to give a perspective of development since the establishment of Kitsap County in 1857. Facts on topography, soil, climate and forests which influence farming are integrated from surveys and reports of government agencies. Estimates of leading crops by years since 1939 by the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service provide a measure of the trend in the agriculture of the county farm industry.

Acknowledgment is accorded the professional work of several persons. Immediate direction was under Emery C. Wilcox, Agricultural Statistician in Charge, Estimates Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Supervision, research and cartographic illustration was performed by Dr. Woodrow R. Clevinger, Market Analyst, Washington State Department of Agriculture. Edward S. Lippert, student in Agricultural Economics, Washington State College and resident of Port Orchard, Kitsap County, wrote the sections on pattern of agriculture, crops, livestock and marketing and collected much original information. Mr. Richard Perry, of the Washington State Department of Agriculture, and Leonard W. Orvold, D. W. Barrowman and Christian A. Stokstad, Agricultural Statisticians, Agricultural Marketing Service, United States Department of Agriculture, gave valuable assistance. Vladimir Kovalik, University of Washington graduate student in geography, compiled most of the statistical tables and graphs. The clerical staff of the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service prepared tabular material for the book.

J. D. Dwyer, Director
Washington State Department of Agriculture

Olympia, Washington
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PART I

History of Kitsap County Agriculture

Introduction

Kitsap County is a forested glacial till plain and a peninsular area located in the center of Puget Sound to the immediate west of Seattle. Two prominent land forms--the Kitsap Peninsula and Bainbridge Island make up this maritime county of inlets and islands. It has a land area of 402 square miles (approximately 257,280 acres) and is one of the smaller units of the state, ranking thirty-sixth in size among the thirty-nine Washington counties.

While the Kitsap area is small in space, it ranks seventh among its sister counties in population. Earlier forest industry, followed by large U.S. Navy shore base activities and considerable suburban residential settlement, built its population up to 84,700 by 1955. Good transportation across Puget Sound has tied the area in closely with the Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan area. Bremerton, the county's main urban center and an important Pacific Coast naval shipyard base, is the eighth largest city of Washington with a population of 32,400. Port Orchard, population 2,825, is the county seat.

While agriculture has always been secondary to forest industry, naval shipyard employment and commercial service trades in the Kitsap area, it has been developed along with other industries into an important position in the county's economy. Part-time and small-scale farming devoted to berries, poultry, livestock and farm forest products is the predominant characteristic of its agriculture. Kitsap is noted for its strawberry production on Bainbridge Island which ranked sixth in the state in 1955. Christmas trees and other farm forest products from Kitsap woodlands are also important in the state economy. The 1,550 farms of Kitsap County sold products valued at \$1,345,000 in 1954, according to the Census of Agriculture.

History 1/

Kitsap County, named for Indian Chief Kitsap (name meaning "brave"), was created by the Territorial Legislature on January 16, 1857. It was organized

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from the western portion of the original King County to give Kitsap Peninsula and Bainbridge Island settlers and sawmill men a more convenient county seat. Prior to its organization the settlers had to cross Puget Sound to the county seat in Seattle.

The Kitsap area of forest-bordered inlets and islands was first explored by the British naval expedition commanded by Captain George Vancouver in 1792. Aided by Indian Chief Kitsap the Great, the expedition discovered, charted and named major features of the area such as Hood Canal, Admiralty Inlet, Restoration Point and Port Orchard Bay.

The Kitsap Peninsula was an important stronghold of the Puget Sound Indian cultures. The inlets were inhabited by three principal allied tribes--the Skokomish, Suquamish and Duwamish. Two strong Indian leaders, Chief Seattle and Chief Kitsap, were friendly to earlier Puget Sound settlers. In their honor, the City of Seattle and Kitsap County were named after these Indians. The Indians had an abundant natural food supply from the waters, beaches and lush forests and developed relatively no agriculture until the first missionaries and farm settlers arrived. In 1834 the Catholic missionaries, Fathers Demers and De Smet, were with the Indians teaching them some rudimentary agriculture in growing potatoes.

American claim to the area was strengthened in 1841 when the United States Navy expedition commanded by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes explored and charted southern Puget Sound. Lieutenant Wilkes named numerous land features of present Kitsap County: Port Gamble, Port Madison, Bainbridge Island, Port Blakely and Agate Pass.

The arrival of American lumbermen and land settlers did not commence on a large scale until the United States had concluded territorial treaties with Britain and some stronger Puget Sound Indian tribes. British claim to the area was erased by the Oregon Treaty of 1846, establishing the present Canadian boundary. In 1855 and 1856, Governor Isaac Stevens of Washington Territory concluded a series of treaties with Puget Sound tribes which permitted Americans to settle in certain areas. The treaties set aside Indian reservation areas which were closed to white settlement. Kitsap Peninsula Indians moved onto the following reservations in Mason and Kitsap Counties: Port Madison Reservation (4,402 acres), Skokomish Reservation (3,052 acres), Squaxin Island Reservation (1,416 acres), and Port Gamble Reservation (1,232 acres).

1/ This historical summary has been derived from four sources:

- (1) Chloe Sutton. The Book of the Counties, (Kitsap pp. 67-71) 1953 Yearbook, Washington State Associations of County Commissioners and Engineers, in Cooperation with the State College of Washington, 1953.
- (2) Richard M. Perry. The Counties of Washington. Olympia, Secretary of State; State of Washington, 1943. (Mimeographed)
- (3) The Bremerton Sun, Historical Edition, Washington Centennial, Bremerton, Washington, May 15, 1953.
- (4) Dino R. Sivo, Kitsap County Extension Agent, Port Orchard, Washington.

The first American settlements in Kitsap County were established by lumber companies participating in the early trade between Puget Sound and San Francisco, California. In the spring of 1853, Delos Waterman built a mill at Appletree Cove for a San Francisco company. In the autumn of 1853, the Pope and Talbot Company of San Francisco established a large mill at Port Gamble. In 1854 a mill was built at Port Orchard. The coastwise lumber trade and some ship and boat building in Kitsap County were the main industries which built the population of Kitsap County up to 866 by 1870.

Agricultural settlement by homesteaders and millworkers on a part-time basis began in the 1870's along the bottom lands about Port Orchard Bay, Poulsbo and Hood Canal and on the level lands of Bainbridge Island. The area's milltowns were even then dependent on food supplies brought in by ship from farm lands across the Sound and from California. Dense forest and stumpland, poor glacial soils and difficulties of transporting perishable crops held back commercial agriculture. Most farms contained orchards, vegetable gardens and pastures for local on-farm use. Most early settlers depended on mill and boat yard work rather than selling crops and livestock. The peninsula farmers could not compete well with the mainland produce and livestock products brought across the Sound by boats and ferries.

A major development in Kitsap County history began in 1891 when the Puget Sound Navy Yard was established on Sinclair Inlet. This federal installation started out on a small scale and gained size during the Spanish-American War. It reached a payroll of 6,500 by the end of World War I in 1918. As the forests were depleted and large lumber mills were shut down one by one after 1900, Navy Yard employment insured a growing upward trend in the population. Kitsap County grew from 6,767 persons in 1900 to 33,162 in 1920. Curtailment of U.S. Navy expenditures between 1920 and 1930 caused Kitsap County to decrease to 30,776 by 1930. Bremerton, which grew up alongside the Navy Yard, became Kitsap County's largest city, expanding from 3,000 in 1910 to 9,000 by 1920, then going from 15,000 to 28,000 by 1950. The Puget Sound Navy Yard with its large payrolls during World War I and World War II was the predominant influence which caused Kitsap County to grow from 17,000 in 1910 to 84,700 in 1955.

A rapid growth of population on the Kitsap Peninsula after 1910 stimulated a development of part-time and full-time agriculture in this area to supply a large local consumer market. Better water transportation to Seattle and food processing centers on this mainland also encouraged farmers to grow commercial crops and increase production of dairy and poultry products for the Puget Sound marketing area.

Important agricultural developments were made by industrious and skilled specialty farmers. Some Japanese-Americans and Filipino-Americans leased and purchased lands on Bainbridge Island and developed an important strawberry, caneberry and bush berry industry. Scandinavian immigrants of the 1900-1920 period who combined fishing and farming developed a dairy industry at Poulsbo and on the north end of Kitsap Peninsula. Woodland farmers in southern Kitsap County near Hood Canal developed holly farming and Christmas tree culture for a national market.

Public agricultural research and extension work agencies have been important in the advancement of farming. The Washington State College Agricultural

Experiment Stations system, through the Western Washington Experiment Station, Puyallup, has advanced dairying, poultry raising and berry culture through its research work. The County Extension Agent Service established at Port Orchard, May 1, 1917, has been of considerable aid and guidance in the progress of Kitsap County agriculture. Claude B. Sprague was the first County Agent. The Extension Service added a County Forester to the staff in 1950 to serve the increasingly important industry of farm woodland management and harvesting of farm forest products. A Soil Conservation District was formed in 1950 under the Soil Conservation Service which provided engineering assistance for drainage of several areas and the improvement of pasture and crop lands.

Private marketing cooperatives have been of important influence in the evolution of Kitsap County agriculture. Noteworthy has been the work of the marketing specialists and producers organized in the Kitsap-Mason Dairymen's Association with a distributing and processing center in Bremerton and the Washington Co-op Farmers Association with its poultry and egg assembly stations within and adjacent to Kitsap County. The Kitsap County Fair Association was organized in 1947 and has held agricultural fairs annually at Bremerton.

Marketing associations which have played important roles in the development of Kitsap County agriculture include the following: Kitsap County Livestock Association, Kitsap County Dairy Herd Improvement Association, Evergreen Breeders Association, Washington Cooperative Hatcheries, Washington Cooperative Chick Association, Washington Croft Lily Growers Association, Washington Holly Growers Association and the Washington Farm Forestry Association.